

A NEW RECORD OF FRESHWATER BAGRID FISH *MYSTUS PULCHER* CHAUDHURI FROM INDIA¹

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Key words: *Mystus pulcher*, new record, India.

A freshwater Bagrid fish *Mystus pulcher* Chaudhuri originally known from Myanmar, has been recorded for the first time from India. The species was collected from Chatrickong river in the Indo-Myanmar border, which is one of the watersheds of the Chindwin river system. The species is characterised by two pale whitish brown longitudinal stripes, one above and another below the lateral line. A dark spot on the shoulder, another on the base of the caudal fin. A detailed description of the species is provided.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Mystus* Scopoli (1777) belongs to the family Bagridae and is distinguished from other genera in the following characters: interneural shield between basal bone of dorsal fin and occipital process absent; anal fin short with 9-16 rays (Jayaram 1981). Talwar and Jhingran (1991) described eighteen species, of which fifteen are distributed in India and the rest in neighbouring countries. Datta and Laishram (1984) mentioned the possibility of *Mystus pulcher* in Chindwin drainage, hence they included the species in the fish zoogeography list, but without a description. Recently we collected 12 specimens in Chatrickong river. This river is formed of two important streams viz. Sanalok and Khunukong. Sanalok flows on the eastern side and Khunukong on the western side; both the streams, after flowing for about 100 km, meet at Dha-ado. The river then flows as Chatrickong for about 5 km in an easterly direction into Myanmar and finally joins the Chindwin drainage. The species is reported for the first time from India and is a new record.

Mystus pulcher Chaudhuri

Mystus pulcher Chaudhuri, 1911, *Rec. Indian Mus.*, 6: 20 pl. 1, fig 4 (type locality: Bhamo, Myanmar). *Mystus (Mystus) pulcher*, Jayaram 1929, *Rec. Indian Mus.* 51: p. 332

¹Accepted October, 1998

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Material examined: MUMF/ 1100/12
55.1-69.9 mm standard length, coll. Keishing
Selim, Chatrickong River, 6.vi.1996.

DESCRIPTION

D. i, 7; i, 8; V. i, 5; A. ii, 10; C 17. Body elongate and compressed. Head depressed, occipital twice as long as broad, reaching basal bone of dorsal fin; median longitudinal groove on head not extending to base of occipital process. Mouth terminal, transverse, upper jaw longer and eyes moderate. Barbels four pairs, maxillary barbels extend posteriorly beyond the anal fin origin, outer mandibulars beyond middle of pectoral spine, inner mandibular barbels to pectoral base. Dorsal spine weak and finely serrated; origin much nearer to adipose dorsal origin than to snout tip. Pectoral fin with a strong spine longer than dorsal spine, finely serrated externally and 10-12 denticulations internally. Pelvic fins do not reach anal; their origin opposite last dorsal ray, much nearer to anal origin than to pectoral base. Anal fin origin just below middle of adipose dorsal, nearly equidistant between pelvic fin origin and caudal fin base. Adipose fin long, inserted close behind dorsal fin. Skin smooth, caudal fin forked.

Proportional Measurements (in %):
Body depth 26.07-26.26, Head length 28.33-29.47, caudal length 26.64-28.93, predorsal length 39.39-41.31, dorsal fin height 19.29-21.20, pectoral fin length 20.35-21.91, pelvic fin length 13.77-17.62, anal fin height 17.36-19.91,

caudal peduncle length 15.56-16.61, caudal peduncle depth 11.02-12.72 in standard length. Head width 70.81-75.75, head height at occiput 66.48-72.08, eye diameter 19.79-21.08, inter-orbital space 36.36-39.08, snout length 33.50-35.35, mouth width 41.08-42.42 in head length.

Colour: Dark brown above, lighter below; two pale whitish brown longitudinal stripes, one above and the other below the lateral line. A dark spot on shoulder, another on the base of caudal fin.

Distribution: INDIA: Chatrickong River, Ukhrul dist., Manipur; Myanmar.

DISCUSSION

The specimens examined agree with the original description of the species from Myitkyina, Myanmar described by Chaudhuri

(1911). Though slight difference is seen in the morphometric measurements, these are small and within the range of *Mystus pulcher*.

The present specimens were collected in June 1996, when the water was quite muddy. The species was usually found in this muddy bottom. This note extends the distribution of *Mystus pulcher* (Chaudhuri 1911) from its original drainage in Myanmar to the Chindwin watershed in Manipur, India and is thus a new record for India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Department of Environment, Forest & Wildlife, Govt. of India (Sanct. No. 14/36/95-MAB/RE,) for financial assistance during the course of this investigation.

COMPARISON OF *MYSTUS PULCHER* CHAUDHURI WITH SPECIMEN FROM CHATRICKONG MANIPUR, INDIA.

Characters	Specimen from Chatrickong, Manipur	<i>M. pulcher</i> (Jayaram 1977)	<i>M. pulcher</i> (Talwar and Jhingran 1991)
Body depth in SL	3.45-3.79	3.8	3.8
Head length in SL	3.39-3.52	3.0-3.6	-
Eye diameter in HL	4.74-4.82	-	3.8-4.3
Caudal peduncle height in its length	1.6	-	1.8
Branchiostegal rays	6	-	6
Barbels	4	-	4

- not given

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